

**AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

Claim 1. (*Original*) A slide fastener comprising:

a first strip of material and a second strip of material;

a first fastening device extending along and affixed to a longitudinally extending edge of said first strip of material and a second fastening device extending along and affixed to a longitudinally extending edge of said second strip of material;

a slider mounted for longitudinal sliding in a path along said first and second edges of said first and second strips of material to control closing and opening of the first and second fastening devices by, respectively, causing a locking of said first fastening device to said second fastening device in a closing direction and an unlocking of said first fastening device from said second fastening device in an opening direction;

a blocking member directly or indirectly affixed to one of said first and second strips whereby, when said first and second strips are interconnected by said first and second fastening devices, said blocking member extends in a blocking position across said path of said slider to interfere with movement of said slider in said opening direction;

said blocking member further comprising a retracting device to cause automatic retraction of said blocking member as said slider moves and engages said blocking member in said closing direction, whereby said blocking member comprises a construction to cause automatic return of said blocking member to said blocking position after said slider moves beyond said blocking member in said closing direction.

Claim 2. (*Original*) A slide fastener according to claim 1, wherein:

said retracting device comprises a ramp inclined with respect to said path of said slider in said closing direction, whereby said slider is engagable with said inclined ramp to move said blocking member toward a retracted position, and whereby said blocking member returns to said blocking position after said slider moves beyond said blocking member in said closing direction.

Claim 3. (*Original*) A slide fastener according to claim 1, wherein:

said blocking member has a form of a plate, whereby, in said blocking position, said plate extends in a plane substantially parallel to a plane of said first and second strips of material;

said plate element comprises a blocking edge, said blocking edge extending substantially perpendicular to said path of said slider.

Claim 4. (*Original*) A slide fastener according to claim 3, wherein:

said blocking member comprises an edge that is inclined with respect to said path of said slider.

Claim 5. (*Original*) A slide fastener according to claim 1, wherein:

said blocking member is directly or indirectly connected to one of said first and second strips of material along a length of a lateral edge, substantially parallel to said path of said slider.

Claim 6. (*Original*) A slide fastener according to claim 1, wherein:

said blocking member is assembled to a flexible panel with said one of said first and second strips by means of a common stitching.

Claim 7. (*Original*) A slide fastener according to claim 1, wherein:

said blocking member is made from semi-flexible material.

Claim 8. (*Original*) A slide fastener according to claim 4, wherein:

said blocking edge and/or said retracting edge is/are reinforced.

Claim 9. (*Original*) A slide fastener according to claim 1, wherein:

said fastening devices are made of a plastic material.

Claim 10. (*New*) A slide fastener comprising:

a first strip of material and a second strip of material;

a first fastening device extending along and affixed to a longitudinally extending edge of said first strip of material and a second fastening device extending along and affixed to a longitudinally extending edge of said second strip of material;

a slider mounted for longitudinal sliding in a path along said first and second edges of said first and second strips of material to control closing and opening of the first and second fastening devices by, respectively, causing a locking of said first fastening device to said second fastening device in a closing direction and an unlocking of said first fastening device from said second fastening device in an opening direction;

a blocking member directly or indirectly affixed to one of said first and second strips whereby, when said first and second strips are interconnected by said first and second fastening devices, said blocking member extends in a blocking position across said path of said slider to interfere with movement of said slider in said opening direction; and

wherein said blocking member has a form of a plate, whereby, in said blocking position, said plate extends in a plane substantially parallel to a plane of said first and second strips of material; said plate comprises a blocking edge, said blocking edge extending substantially perpendicular to said path of said slider.

Claim 11. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 10, wherein:

said blocking member comprises an edge that is inclined with respect to said path of said slider to cause automatic retraction of said blocking member as said slider moves and engages said blocking member in said closing direction.

Claim 12. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 11, wherein:

said blocking member returns to said blocking position after said slider moves beyond said blocking member in said closing direction.

Claim 13. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 10, wherein:

said blocking member is directly or indirectly connected to one of said first and second strips of material along a length of a lateral edge, substantially parallel to said path of said slider.

Claim 14. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 10, wherein:

said blocking member is assembled to a flexible panel with said one of said first and second strips by means of stitching.

Claim 15. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 10, wherein:

said blocking member is made from semi-flexible material.

Claim 16. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 10, wherein:

said blocking member is made of plastic.

Claim 17. (*New*) A slide fastener comprising:

a first strip of material and a second strip of material;

a first fastening device extending along and affixed to a longitudinally extending edge of said first strip of material and a second fastening device extending along and affixed to a longitudinally extending edge of said second strip of material;

a slider mounted for longitudinal sliding in a path along said first and second edges of said first and second strips of material to control closing and opening of the first and second fastening devices by, respectively, causing a locking of said first fastening device to said second fastening devices in a closing direction and an unlocking of said first fastening device from said second fastening device in an opening direction;

a blocking member constructed so, when said first and second strips are interconnected by said first and second fastening devices, said blocking member extends in a blocking position across said path of said slider to interfere with movement of said slider in said opening direction;

said blocking member further comprising a retracting device to cause automatic retraction of said blocking member as said slider moves and engages said blocking member in said closing direction.

Claim 18. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 17, wherein:

said retracting device comprises a ramp inclined with respect to said path of said slider in said closing direction, whereby said slider is engagable with said inclined ramp to move said blocking member toward a retracted position.

Claim 19. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 18, wherein:

said blocking member returns to said blocking position after said slider moves beyond said blocking member in said closing direction.

Claim 20. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 17, wherein:

said blocking member has a form of a plate, whereby, in said blocking position, said plate extends in a plane substantially parallel to a plane of said first and second strips of material;

said plate comprises a blocking edge, said blocking edge extending substantially perpendicular to said path of said slider, and wherein said plate comprises an edge that is inclined with respect to said path of said slider.

Claim 21. (*New*) A slide fastener according to claim 17, wherein:

said blocking member is made from semi-flexible material.

Claim 22. (New) A slide fastener assembly comprising:

a first lengthwise extending fastening device and a second lengthwise extending fastening device;

a slider mounted to slide in a lengthwise path along said first and second fastening devices in a closing direction to engage said first and second fastening devices and in an opening direction to disengage said first and second fastening devices, said slider thereby being mounted to slide between closed and open positions of the slide fastener;

a blocking member mounted to extend across said first and second fastening devices in the closed position of the slide fastener to present a blocking portion of said blocking member for engagement with a portion of said slider;

in said closed position of the slide fastener, said slider extending lengthwise in said closing direction past said blocking portion of said blocking member to interfere with movement of said slider in the opening direction.

Claim 23. (New) A slide fastener assembly according to claim 22, further comprising:

a first piece of material to which the first fastening device is connected, and a second piece of material to which the second fastening device is connected, said first and second pieces of material comprising distinct panels of a garment or a single panel of a garment.

Claim 24. (New) A slide fastener assembly according to claim 23, wherein:

said blocking member is affixed to only one of the first and second pieces of material and extends across said first and second fastening devices toward the other of the first and second pieces of material.

Claim 25. (*New*) A slide fastener assembly according to claim 24, wherein:

said blocking member is made of a flexible material to enable lifting of the blocking member to allow the slider to pass beneath the blocking member.

Claim 26. (*New*) A slide fastener assembly according to claim 22, wherein:

said first and second fastening devices comprise first and second series of teeth, the slide fastener thereby constituting a zipper.

Claim 27. (*New*) A slide fastener assembly according to claim 26, further comprising:

a pull tab movably connected to the slider to facilitate movement of the slider.